

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01

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R 111640Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3913

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TS, AG, IT

SUBJ: TUNISIAN CABINET APPROVES ALGERIA-ITALY NATURAL
GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

REF (A) ROME 11661, (B) ALGIERS 2290

1. TUNISIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON DECEMBER 6 ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAS APPROVED AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOT AND ITALIAN PETROLEUM COMPANY ENI TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A NATURAL GAS PIPELINE THROUGH TUNISIA BETWEEN ALGERIA AND ITALY. ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO NOTES THAT REALIZATION OF THIS PROJECT WILL PERMIT TUNISIA TO USE IMPORTANT QUANTITIES OF GAS FOR ITS OWN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS PERMIT TUNISIA TO FULFILL ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE OF BEING A LINK BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD. PRIME MINISTER INFORMS ME THAT TUNISIA WILL INITIALLY RECEIVE 500 MILLION CUBIC METERS OF GAS ANNUALLY FROM PIPELINE WITH OPTION TO RECEIVE
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DOUBLE THAT AMOUNT IN FUTURE. GAS WILL BE USED FOR CEMENT

PLANT OF ABOUT ONE MILLION TONS ANNUAL CAPACITY AT THALA
IN TUNISIA AND SIMILAR ONE AT GABES AND ALSO FOR
FERTILIZER AND OTHER INDUSTRIES.

2. ALGERIAN MINISTERIAL DELEGATION, HEADED BY MINISTER
OF TRADE LAYACHI YAKER, WHICH HAS BEEN DISCUSSING
THIS PROJECT AS WELL AS ALGERIAN-TUNISIAN COOPERATION
IN OTHER SECTORS, CALLED ON PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA DECEMBER

10. YAKER TOLD PRESS AFTER MEETING THAT TUNISIANS AND
ALGERIANS HAVE AGREED ON COMMON POLICY IN REGARD TO
HYDROCARBONS, INDUSTRY AND MINES. YAKER ALSO STATED
THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD TO FURTHER TRADE RELATIONS
ON BASIS OF MEETING PRIORITY AND COMPLIMENTARY NEEDS
OF BOTH COUNTRIES. THESE QUESTIONS, HE STATED, WOULD
BE DISCUSSED IN FURTHER DETAIL BY JOINT TUNISIAN-ALGERIAN
COMMISSION IN JANUARY IN ALGIERS.

3. COMMENT: AGREEMENT MAKES CLEAR THAT BUILDING GAS
PIPELINE UNDER MEDITERRANEAN TO BYPASS TUNISIA NO LONGER
UNDER CONSIDERATION. PIPELINE PROJECT WILL BE OF
CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO TUNISIA AS A SOURCE OF
EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY DURING CONSTRUCTION
PHASE, AS A SOURCE OF TRANSIT REVENUE WHEN PROJECT IS
COMPLETED, AS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF ENERGY FOR
VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS. PIPELINE PROJECT WILL
RESULT IN A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE WITH
CONSIDERABLE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES.
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